



Duncanville Independent
School District
"Champions for Children"

Alfred L. Ray, Ph. D.
Superintendent of Schools

802 South Main
Duncanville, Texas 75137
(972) 708-2000
Fax: (972) 708-2008

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Dear Senate Education Committee Members,

My name is Alfred Ray and I am Superintendent of the Duncanville Independent School District. As our district and its Board of Trustees have upheld its end of the bargain by providing great education (by any of the measurable standards) to a 90% minority, 70% economically disadvantaged student population; I offer my statements to you regarding the bills currently before you.

Providing flexibility in regards to specific personal-related mandates is something that can benefit our schools. Consequently I would like to inform you that our Board, many Region 10 education leaders and I request the following:

1. That relief from the requirements of 21.402(d) of the Education Code be granted, allowing district leaders an important tool to responsibly manage district funds while minimizing the number of Texans forced into unemployment. There are many reasons, but please consider this – anyone who claims education spending has increased too much must both recognize and provide relief from previous one-time mandates increasing salary, which add to spending on a recurring basis.
2. That school district leaders be provided the ability to implement a furlough (without WADA penalty) of up to seven days (no more than four of which may be instructional days) in order to have an additional tool to responsibly manage district funds while minimizing the number of Texans forced into unemployment. It is important that local Boards be allowed to utilize furloughs as a fiscal management tool, and that they be allowed to utilize furloughs in reasonable combinations of instructional and non-instructional days. It would be an extremely difficult burden on school district leaders to be able to only furlough days of staff training and development, when new, additional, and still unknown requirements under the accountability system are implemented. If only non-instructional days

are allowed for furlough, then accordingly, the new accountability system's implementation should be postponed.

3. That the 45-day notice deadline for non-renewal of term contract staff be changed until the end of the instructional year. It only makes sense that, in fairness to both a teacher and the district, a full year of evaluation and opportunity for growth be afforded prior to making a decision to grant or not grant an additional full year contract. Under current law, logistically, this information is acted upon by the Board of Trustees in March, meaning realistically a campus administrator must decide in mid-February whether the teacher will return. If the teacher is non-renewed, he/she will remain for three to three and half months throughout the testing season as a "lame duck" with a district who no longer wants him/her. Should the teacher improve in the remaining months, there is little chance the relationship is reparable for either party at that point. At the same time, for some teachers, this decision could potentially cause a lessening of the their performance with young people who are at a very crucial state in their school year. The 45-day notice deadline makes no sense in any year and I urge your consideration to relieve school districts from this mandate.

It is important that these measures, tools, and changes be adopted permanently as they will help school districts in any context. I strongly urge your support and appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alfred Ray, Ph.D.
Superintendent